

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 OMB-01 SOE-02 DOE-15 EB-08 ACDA-12 TRSE-00
EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 MCE-00 HA-05 /151 W
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P 231630Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2388

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CARACAS 4680

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECIN, EFIN, PEPR, MARR, CH, CS, CU, DR, PN, UR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ

1. PRESIDENT PEREZ INVITED BOB PASTOR AND THE AMBASSADOR TO MEET WITH HIM ON MAY 21. THEIR TWO-HOUR MEETING WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO "SESSIONS" OCCASIONED BY THE PRESIDENT LEAVING FOR HIS "RALLY" ON THE DR (CARACAS 4633). ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER WAS PRE

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SENT AT BOTH SESSIONS, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ON A LIGHTNING AND SECRET VISIT TO VENEZUELA, WAS PRESENT AT THE SECOND.

2. THE AMBASSADOR OPENED WITH THE CONSULTATION REQUEST REGARDING MONDALE'S SPEECH AT THE SSOD (STATE 129830). PRESIDENT PEREZ APPRECIATED THE COURTESY OF BEING CONSULTED AND ASKED THAT NO REFERENCES TO VENEZUELA OR AYACUCHO OR LATIN AMERICA BE MADE. HE WANTED TO GIVE NO ONE, HE SAID, THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHARGE THAT THE US AND VENEZUELA HAVE BEEN "COLLUDING". THE PRESIDENT THEN SAID THAT THE DOCUMENTS (NON-PAPERS) ON THE REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT PROPOSAL GIVEN TO HIM WERE EXCELLENT. THEY WOULD BE USED LIBERALLY. HE SAID ALSO THAT ON MONDAY, MAY 22, HE PLANNED TO SEND TELEGRAMS TO THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF THE AYACUCHO SIGNATORIES INVITING THEIR FOREIGN MINISTERS TO MEET INFORMALLY SOME TIME DURING THE SSOD TO DISCUSS A REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT PROPOSAL AND TO
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FIX AN AGENDA FOR A MORE STRUCTURED AND FORMAL MEETING TO BE HELD SOON. FOREIGN MINISTER CONSALVI POINTED OUT THAT SINCE THERE WOULD BE A MEETING IN PANAMA IN JUNE INVOLVING SOME OF THE AYACUCHO SIGNATORIES, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL ALSO TO CONSIDER SOME SORT OF DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON A REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT PROPOSAL WHICH MIGHT BE SIGNED BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE DURING THE PANAMA MEETING. THIS DECLARATION COULD THEN BE

OPEN TO SIGNATURE BY ALL COUNTRIES IN THE HEMISPHERE. IN THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONCEPTION THIS WOULD BE A SORT OF PARALLEL TO THE TREATY OF TLAHELCO.

3. IN DISCUSSING THE REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT PROPOSAL, PRESIDENT PEREZ RECALLED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN VISITED BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WHO HAD RAISED TWO SUBJECTS WITH HIM: DISARMAMENT AND CHINA (CARACAS 4532). ON CHINA THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM THAT VENEZUELA AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE US TOTALLY MISUNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM OF CHINA IN ATTEMPTING TO CAST IT IN TERMS OF SOVIET/CHINESE TENSION. THE PROBLEM, SAID THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, IS THAT CHINA IS STILL THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHICH STILL TALKS ABOUT THE INEVITABILITY OF ARMED CONFLICT. HE SAID CHINA FULLY INTENDS TO BECOME A MAJOR MILITARY POWER AND ALTHOUGH IT IS MANY YEARS AWAY FROM ACHIEVING THAT, CHINA CAN BE COUNTED ON TO MAKE STRONG EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD. ON THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS VERY INTERESTED IN DISARMAMENT. HE ASSURED PEREZ THAT THE US AND THE SOVIETS WILL MAKE SOME PROGRESS BOTH IN THE SSOD AS WELL AS IN SALT. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION AGREES THAT SUPPLIER RESTRAINT IS NECESSARY. PRESIDENT PEREZ SAID HE REPLIED TO THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ALONG TWO LINES. IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE SAID AS LONG AS THE SUPER POWERS PURSUE "BLOC" POLICIES, THE RESULT WILL BE ARMED CAMPS. HE OBSERVED, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT DECISION ON THE MIDDLE EAST ARMS SALES, ALTHOUGH IT CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS A CLEAR WARNING TO ISRAEL THAT THE COUNTRY COULD NOT COUNT ON UNCONDITIONAL US SUPPORT, NEVERTHELESS CLEARLY PROLONGED A SITUATION OF "ARMED PEACE." HE WAS SURE, SAID PRESIDENT PEREZ, THAT IN NO TIME AT ALL LIBYA AND IRAQ WOULD MAKE APPEALS TO THE SOVIET UNION TO INCREASE THEIR ARMS LEVELS. PRESIDENT PEREZ THEN SAID TO US THAT ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTOOD WHY PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TAKEN THIS DECISION, THERE WAS A CLEAR PHILOSOPHIC CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THIS ACT AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONCEPTUAL STAND ON ARMS TRANSFER. HE THOUGHT THAT THIS CONTRADICTION HAD TO BE BROUGHT UP IN THE UN (AND PRESUMABLY WILL BE IN CONSALVI'S SPEECH).

4. THE SECOND POINT PEREZ SAID HE MADE TO THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT IN LATIN AMERICA WHEN THE SOVIETS HAVE ARMED CUBA AND GIVEN IT SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS AND MADE OF IT THE MAJOR LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY POWER. HOW CAN I, PEREZ ASKED THE SOVIET, STAVE OFF LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS BY MY MILITARY WHEN THEY TELL ME THAT THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES HAVE CREATED AN IMBALANCE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE WEAPONS TO REDRESS THAT BALANCE?

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CARACAS 4680

5. PASTOR THEN REFERRED TO HIS VISIT TO PANAMA. HE EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT CARTE VIEWS HIS TRIP TO PANAMA AND THE RATIFICATION OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES NOT AS AN END OF US INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA, BUT A BEGINNING, AND A BASIS FOR FURTHER ADVANCE. SOME THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO A POSSIBLE DECLARATION THAT COULD BE SIGNED THERE BY THE ASSEMBLED CHIEFS OF STATE. IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH TORRIJOS THE THOUGHT HAD EMERGED THAT SUCH A DECLARATION COULD EMBRACE THREE SETS OF GOALS. THE FIRST WOULD BE WORLD PEACE AND COULD INCLUDE SUCH MEASURES AS PUTTING THE TLATELOLCO TREATY INTO EFFECT THIS YEAR AND A REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT PROPOSAL. THE SECOND SET WOULD COVER HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY, AND THE LAST SET WOULD DEAL WITH NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES. MR. PASTOR SAID THAT TORRIJOS WAS THINKING OF A SIGNLE MEETING INVOLVING ALL THE PRESIDENTS RATHER THAN BILATERAL MEETINGS. PRESIDENT PEREZ SAID HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE IDEA, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST. PASTOR NOTED THAT THE PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE VISITING BOGOTA, CARACAS, KINGSTON AND MEXICO AND WOULD PROBABLY BE BRINGING AN OUTLINE OF POSSIBLE IDEAS FOR SUCH A DECLARATION. PEREZ CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE IN CARACAS THIS THURSDAY.

6. PASTOR ALSO OBSERVED THAT TORRIJOS SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT THE RETURN OF FORMER PRESIDENT ARNULFO ARIAS TO PANAMA INEARLY
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JUNE. PEREZ REPLIED THAT THE ARIAS PROBLEM WAS LIKE THE VELASCO IBARRA PROBLEM IN ECUADOR AND THAT IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT

TORRIJOS STILL DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH IT. PEREZ SAID THAT HE WAS GOING TO TALK TO TORRIJOS ABOUT ARIAS. PEREZ SAID ALSO THAT WHEN HE VISITED PANAMA IN JUNE HE WAS GOING TO HAVE SOME DISCREET MEETINGS WITH SOME ANTI-TORRIJOS GROUPS WITH WHICH HE (PEREZ) HAD CLOSE CONNECTIONS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD INDICATIONS THAT THESE ANTI-TORRIJOS GROUPS WERE THINKING OF USING ARIAS TO GET RID OF TORRIJOS. HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO MAKE EFFORTS TO DISSUADE THEM FROM THIS COURSE BECAUSE IT WAS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. PEREZ ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE US AND VENEZUELA, AS WELL AS COLOMBIA AND COSTA RICA, TO PUT DISCREET PRESSURE ON TORRIJOS TO MOVE PANAMA BACK TO DEMOCRACY. HE SAID THAT TORRIJOS HAD LOST HIS ONE BIG EXCUSE TO GOVERN DICTATORIALLY, I.E., THE "COLONIALIST" PANAMA CANAL ZONE.

7. PEREZ SAID THAT HE HAD SENT MESSAGES TO PRESIDENT CARAZO OF COSTA RICA INDICATING THAT NOTHING HAD CHANGED IN VENEZUELAN -COSTA RICAN RELATIONS BECAUSE OF CARAZO'S ELECTION. THE SAME CLOSENESS THAT HAD EXISTED WITH ODUBER WOULD CONTINUE, HE SAID, AND AS PROOF OF IT, HW WAS GOING TO NAME AS HIS AMBASSADOR TO COSTA RICA A VERY CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF CARAZO'S. PEREZ ASKED MR. PASTOR IF THE USG COULD DO A FAVOR TO COSTA RICA AND GIVE ITS AGREEMENT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO CARAZO'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. THIS WAS NECESSARY, HE SAID, TO ALLOW THE COSTA RICANS TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY ON SUCH ISSUES AS NICARAGUA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

8. PRESIDENT PEREZ RAISED THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SEVERAL TIMES. HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING THERE WAS IMPORTANT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY THAT A MILITARY COUP HAD BEEN AVERTED BY INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESSURE. THIS WAS MOST IMPORTANT AS A PRECEDENT, PARTICULARLY IN A YEAR IN WHICH ELECTIONS ARE TO BE HELD IN BOLIVIA, ECUADOR AND PERU, ELECTIONS WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO MOVE THESE COUNTRIES FROM BEING MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS BACK INTO THE DEMOCRATIC CAMP. PRESIDENT PEREZ SAID HE WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE PUBLIC CEREMONY WHICH WHICH HE HAD HELD (AT ABOUT 8:30 P.M, MAY 21, AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE) INVOLVING REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL MAJOR INSTITUTIONS IN VENEZUELAN SOCIETY (CARACAS 4633) TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. HE OBSERVED THAT MANY VENEZUELAN RADIO STATIONS CAN BE HEARD CLEARLY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. THAT IS WHY, HE SAID, HIS SPEECH WAS CARRIED BY ALL VENEZUELAN TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS. PEREZ SAID THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR MACHIN TO REQUEST A MEETING OF THE ORGAN OF CONSULTATION, BUT TO ASK ORFILA TO AVOID SETTING A DATE. THIS WOULD BE A KIND OF PRESSURE ON THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SITUATION (CARACAS 4634).

9. THIS BROUGHT PEREZ TO A POINT WHICH HE MADE TWICE. HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES, IN HIS EXPERIENCE, ALWAYS ATTEMPTS TO INTERPRET EVENTS IN LATIN AMERICA THROUGH ITS OWN EYES. IT IS NECESSARY, HE SAID, TO LISTEN TO THE LATINS IN ORDER TO FIND OUT HOW THEY PERCEIVE CERTAIN PROBLEMS. HE WAS VERY HAPPY, HE SAID, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS PAYING CLOSER ATTENTION TO HOW THE LATINS PERCEIVED THEIR PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT CUBA, IN HIS VIEW, WAS THE PRIME EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN THE US LOOKS AT PROBLEMS THROUGH ITS OWN EYES. IF THE US HAD ONLY HAD MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE LATINS, THE FIDEL CASTRO PROBLEM WOULD HAVE BEEN RESOLVED DIFFERENTLY.
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